In the midst of the depression, the parish struggled to pay off the mortgage. In 1937 the church would have defaulted if not for a city-wide Diocesan appeal. Eleanor Roosevelt wrote a letter urging Episcopalians not to let the work of such a parish “lapse for material reasons.” Finally, thanks to a bequest from Lynch Luquer, the debt was paid off and the mortgage ceremonially burned in 1952. That permitted the church finally to be consecrated—canon law forbade the formal hallowing of ecclesiastical property encumbered by debt.

In 1936 and 1941, Diocesan convention was held at St. Stephen’s. Before the Cathedral was built, St. Stephen’s was the largest church in the diocese.

A. Edward Faro painted the walls around the ambry—the niche for keeping sacred vessels to the right of the Incarnation Chapel altar. Faro was senior warden in the late 1950s.

The Early Years of St. Stephen & the Incarnation

The original altar of St. Stephen and the Incarnation. It was removed in the early 1960s.

A gathering of well-dressed youth in the auditorium, probably in the 1930s.

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